

313. Relation of slavery to the mores and to ethics. Inasmuch as slavery springs from greed and vanity, it appeals to primary motives and is at once intertwined with selfishness and other fundamental vices. It is not, therefore, a cause which gradually produces and molds the mores, nor is it an ethical product of folkways and mores. It is characteral. It rises into an interest which overrules everything else. This appears most clearly in the history of Roman slavery (see sec. 288). The due succession of folkways, mores, character, and ethics is here broken. The motive of slavery is base and cruel from the beginning. Later, there are many people of high character who accept it as an inheritance, and are not corrupted by it. The due societal relation of interests and mores is broken, however. It is an evil thing that that relation should be broken. All which is moral (pertaining to mores) or ethical is thrown out of sequence and relation. The interests normally control life. It is not right that ethical generalizations should get dogmatic authority and be made the rule of life. Ethical generalizations are vague and easy. They satisfy loose thinkers, and it is a matter of regret when, in any society, they get the currency of fashion and are cherished by great numbers. Interests ought to control, being checked and verified by ethical principles of approved validity. Slavery is an interest which is sure to break over all restraints and correctives. It therefore becomes mistress of folkways and dictates the life policy. It is a kind of pitfall for civilization. It seems to be self-evident and successful, but it contains a number of forms of evil which are sure to unfold. The Moslems have suffered from the curse of it,

although in  
entirely other ways than the Christians. It  
intertwines with any  
other great social evil which may be present.  
There it has  
combined with polygamy. It is, in any case, an  
institution  
which radically affects the mores, but it is to be  
noticed that its  
effect on them is not normal and not such as  
belongs to the  
prosperous development of civilization.